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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-05 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 DHA-02 /069 W

R 261502Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8736

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 0613

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINS PINT SHUM AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINES QUESTION GOA ACCOUNTS OF TERRORIST CONFRONTA-
TIONS AND RELEASE LISTS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0162

1. A NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT SOURCES HAVE SEPARATELY TOLD EMBOFFS THAT DEATHS OF PERONIS LEADER DARDO CABO AND ROBERTO PERLIZ IN TERRORIST AMBUSH ON JAN 6 WERE ENGINEERED BY SECURITY FORCES. EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER LRECEIVED LETTER SIGNED "FAMILIES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS" REFUTING THE MILITARY COMMUNIQUE ON THE AMBUSH, POINTING OUT THAT THE TWO PRISONERS WHO WERE ALLEGEDLY BEING TRANSFERRED WERE TAKEN OUT AT 1 A. M. AND WERE NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE THEIR CLOTHES AND BELONGINGS AS IS CUSTOMARY WITH NORMAL TRANSFERS; THAT THE PRISON THEY WERE REPORTEDLY HEADED FOR WAS A DETENTION CENTER FOR WOMEN AND THAT THE ALLEGED AMBUSH TOOK PLACE ON A ROAD 30 KILOMETERS OFF THE ROUTE CONNECTING THE TWO PRISONS. FATHER OF ANOTHER PRISONER WHO WAS HOUSED WITH DARDO CABO IN LA PLATA PRISON TOLD LABATT THAT HE LEARNED FROM HIS SON THAT ALL OF THE STATE OF SIEGE DETAINEES IN LA PLATA HAVE BEEN BEATNE AND THREAT- ENED WITH DEATH AND THAT WHEN DARDO CABO LEFT HE WAS TAKEN SUDDENLY IN THE NIGHT AND NOT ALLOWED TO BRING HIS BELONGINS WITH HIM. A MEMBER OF THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TOLD POLOFF THAT DARDO CABO WAS SUDDENLY TRANSFERRED TO A

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SOLITARY CELL SOME DAYS BEFORE THE ALLEGED TRANSFER AT WHICH TIME HE CONFIDED TO OTHER PRISONERS THAT HE EXPECTED TO BE KILLED. THESE REPORTS COINCIDE WITH INFORMATION PROVIDED BY SRF SOURCES, THAT DARDO CABO'S DEATH WAS PLANNED BY SECURITY FORCES. PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IS THE FACT THAT ARGENTINES ARE QUESTIONING THE VERACITY OF MILITARY COMMUNIQUE ON TERRORIST CONFRONTATIONS AND BRINGING THEIR INFORMATION TO THE ATTENTION OF EMBOFFS. SIMILAR IMPRESSIONS ARE ALSO CIRCULATING WITH EMBASSY CONTACTS IN THE LOCAL PRESS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY, POLITICAL AND LABOR CIRCLES, ETC.

2. EMBASSY SOURCES HAVE ALSO CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THAT PERSONS NAMED ON LISTS AS BEING RELEASED FROM EXECUTIVE DISPOSITION ARE NOT REAPPEARING, EITHER AS TRANSFERRED TO THE REGULAR CRIMINAL COURT SYSTEM OR FREED FROM DETENTION ALTOGETHER. PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF JAN 21 THAT ASSEMBLY HAS FILE OF NEARLY 2,000 NAMES OF DETAINED OR DISAPPEARED PERSONS AND THAT FEW OF THEM FIGURED IN THE SEVERAL LISTS PUBLISHED BY THE INTERIOR MINISTRY SINCE DECEMBER. SOME OF THE NAMES LISTED WERE OF PERSONS WHO WERE ABDUCTED FROM THEIR HOMES BY UNIDENTIFIED ARMED PERSONS, HE SAID, AND THE APPEARANCE OF THE NAME ON THE LIST WAS THE FIRST INDICATION THE FAMILY HAD THAT THE PERSON WAS IN CUSTODY OF THE EXECUTIVE. OFFICIAL MENTIONED SEVERAL SPECIFIC CASES WHERE FAMILIES HAVE STILL RECEIVED NO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OR NEWS ABOUT THE WHEREABOUTS OF THEIR RELATIVES WHOSE NAMES APPEARED ON THE LISTS. OFFICIAL POINTED OUT THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ONCE RELEASED, THE PERSON MAY PREFER TO KEEP HIS WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN OR MAY TRY TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY AND THEREFORE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE ACCURATE ESTIMATES ON THE ACTUAL SITUATION OF MOST OF THOSE WHOSE NAMES APPEARED ON LISTS. HOWEVER, AS HE AND OTHERS HAVE MADE CLEAR, THE PUBLISHING OF THE LISTS HAS NOT CLARIFIED EITHER THE STATUS OR WHEREABOUTS OF MANY OF THE PERSONS ON THE LISTS NOR HAS IT ANSWERED THE QUESTIONS SURROUNDING MANY OTHERS WHO DISAPPEARED DURING 1975 AND 1976. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THE LOCAL PRESS, INCLUDING THE BAR HERALD WHICH HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY INSISTENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT

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PUBLISH LISTS OF DETAINEES, HAS MADE NO COMMENT ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE LISTS.

3. "LA OPINION" RAISED THE QUESTION IN PRINT ON JAN 22, NOTING THAT SINCE PERSONS LISTED AS BEING RELEASED FROM EXECUTIVE DISPOSITION

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SITION HAVE NOT, IN MANY CASES, BEEN DISCHARGED FROM PRISON, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT GOA PROVIDE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON EACH CASE, PARTICULARLY IF THE PERSON HAS BEEN REMANDED TO THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM. AS AN EXAMPLE, IT MENTIONED THE CASE OF PATRICIA BORENSTEIN WHOSE NAME FIRST APPEARED ON A LIST OF PERSONS RELEASED BY THE EXECUTIVE IN DECEMBER, THEN REAPPEARED ON ANOTHER LIST OF PERSONS DETAINED BY THE EXECUTIVE IN EARLY JANUARY. THE PAPER QUESTIONED WHETHER IN THE INTERIM THE WOMAN HAD BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE CRIMINAL COURTS, FREED OR LEFT IN JAIL AND ASKED WHY THE EXECUTIVE WOULD RELEASE HER ONE WEEK AND REARREST HER THE NEXT.

4. THE QUESTIONS POSED BY "LA OPINION" ARE CIRCULATING WIDELY HERE. AT NEXT OPPORTUNITY EMBASSY WILL ASK SENIOR GOVT OFFICIALS FOR CLARIFICATION ON PRECISE MEANING OF LISTS.
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